potential of 90 Million hectare (Mha) has been created upto the end of the Eighth Plan against the ultimate irrigation potential of 139.9 Mha in the country.

Government of India is promoting rainwater harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rainwater harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Governments and other implementing agencies. The Central Ground Water Board under Ministry of Water Resources is implementing a Central Sector pilot scheme of artificial recharge to ground water through rain water harvesting in different parts of the country.

Ministry of Agriculture is implementing a scheme entitled 'Macro-Management' in all States and Union Territories. This includes watershed management in the catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone rivers and National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas. Under the above two programmes for conserving the rainwater, farm ponds and water harvesting structures are being constructed. Water collected in these structures is being utilized for life saving irrigation to the crops at the time of scarcity of rains.

Water disputes among Northern States

4253. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently voicing concern over the country's inability to produce sufficient power in the past 50 years and on-going river

water disputes, Prime Minister advised the Chief Minister of Haryana to take the initiative in convening a Conference of the Chief Ministers of the Northern States to sort out these issues in a spirit of give and take in which he offered to attend;

(b) if so, what has been the reaction of the Chief Minister of Haryana;

(c) when and where the meeting was held; and

(d) if not, by when the meeting is likely to be held?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) In his speech during the inauguration of Panorama and Science Centre at Kurukshetra on 6.3.2001, the Prime Minister voiced concern over the country's inability to produce sufficient power in the past 50 years and on-going river water disputes. Referring to the existence of an institutional arrangement comprising some States for good neighbourly cordination, he stated that it is necessary for the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Punjab to frame joint policies on some issues. With specific reference to the need for time bound policies for the National Capital Region, the Prime Minister suggested the Chief Minister of Haryana may take initiative in this regard.

(b) to (d) Recalling that the Chief Minister of Haryana is considering to convene a conference of the Chief Ministers of the region, the Prime Minister wished that such a meeting is held. The meeting has not been held so far.